

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16 or 17, further comprising the step of adding a free-flowing aid after the dry-neutralizing step, to surface modify the detergent granules.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16 or 17, further comprising the step of adding a liquid component after the dry-neutralizing step.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of adding a free-flowing aid after the step of adding a liquid component, to surface-modify the detergent granules.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16 or 17, wherein said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant is a linear alkylbenzenesulfonic acid obtained by a SO₃ gas sulfonation method.

9-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Previously Presented) A high-bulk density detergent composition having a bulk density of 500 g/L or more, comprising detergent granules prepared by the method of claim 16 or 17.

14-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method for producing detergent granules, comprising the step of dry-neutralizing a liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant prepared by a SO₃ gas sulfonation method, with a water-soluble, solid, alkali inorganic substance, wherein a dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of 0.1 to 1.0 ~~mol~~ mole of a sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant;

wherein the amount of sulfuric acid preexisting in the liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant is 0.09 ~~mol~~ mole or less per mole of said liquid acid precursor;

wherein the sulfuric acid is added to the starting material components, including the liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant; and

wherein the resulting detergent granules contain the non-soap, anionic surfactant in an amount of 28% by weight or more and less than 50% by weight, and have a molar ratio of (inorganic salt undetectable by x-ray diffraction method)/(non-soap, anionic

surfactant) of from 0.1 to 1.0, and the inorganic salt undetectable by x-ray diffraction method is sodium sulfate.

17. (Currently Amended) A method for producing detergent granules, comprising the step of dry-neutralizing a liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant prepared by a SO₃ gas sulfonation method, with a water-soluble, solid, alkali inorganic substance, wherein a dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of 0.3 to 1.0 ~~mol~~ mole of a sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant;

wherein the amount of sulfuric acid preexisting in the liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant is 0.09 ~~mol~~ mole or less per mole of said liquid acid precursor;

wherein the sulfuric acid is added to the starting material components, including the liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant; and

wherein the resulting detergent granules contain the non-soap, anionic surfactant in an amount of 10% by weight or more and less than 28% by weight, and have a molar ratio of (inorganic salt undetectable by x-ray diffraction method)/(non-soap, anionic surfactant) of from 0.3 to 1.0, and the inorganic salt undetectable by x-ray diffraction method is sodium sulfate.

18-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A detergent granule prepared by the method of claim 16 or 17.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein the dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of 0.3 to 0.8 ~~mol~~ mole of said sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein the dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of 0.35 to 0.7 ~~mol~~ mole of said sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of 0.3 to 0.8 ~~mol~~ mole of said sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant.

24. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the dry-neutralizing step is carried out in the presence of

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0.35 to 0.7 ~~mol~~ mole of said sulfuric acid per ~~mol~~ mole of said liquid acid precursor of a non-soap, anionic surfactant.